

VZCZCXRO8444
OO RUEH DU RUEHMR RUEHRN
DE RUEHSB #0247/01 0901838
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 301838Z MAR 08
FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2649
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 1854
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 1978
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0551
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1255
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 1612
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 2034
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 4465
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK
RHMFISS/EUCOM POLAD VAIHINGEN GE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1105
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 000247

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

AF/S FOR S. HILL,
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR E. LOKEN AND L. DOBBINS
STATE PASS TO NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR B. PITTMAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/30/2018
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: POST-ELECTION UPDATE

REF: A. HARARE 245

[B](#). HARARE 246 AND PREV.
[C](#). PRETORIA 604

Classified By: Ambassador James D. McGee for reason 1.4 (d)

SUMMARY

[1](#). (SBU) An initial wave of euphoria, prompted by returns from polling stations indicating an MDC landslide, has morphed into concern, as further results are slow in arriving and the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) has not released any official results. The political opposition is expressing concern that ZANU-PF, through the ZEC, is manipulating vote totals in an effort to ensure a Mugabe victory. In the event of a rigged-election victory for Mugabe, it is unclear how the MDC will react. END SUMMARY.

From Euphoria to Concern

[2](#). (U) The MDC held a press conference in the early hours of Sunday morning at which MDC secretary-general Tendai Biti discussed early election returns provided by MDC polling agents from throughout Zimbabwe. Biti said that with the exception of Bulawayo and Matabeleland, where Tsvangirai and the MDC were running neck and neck with Simba Makoni and his independent candidates, the MDC was winning overwhelmingly. He averred that the MDC had won the election "beyond a shadow of a doubt."

[3](#). (U) At a follow-up press conference at 11 am on Sunday, Biti elaborated on results. He stated that the MDC had won all 12 House of Assembly seats in Bulawayo and 5 of 6 Senate seats. (The Mutambara faction's David Coltart won the other, according to Biti.) He said the MDC had captured all

Assembly seats in the Harare area and had done well in Manicaland, Masvingo, and parts of Mashonaland. In response to a question, Biti estimated that Tsvangirai was winning two-thirds of the presidential vote; he admitted, however, that the MDC had results from only 12 percent of polling stations.

¶4. (C) Biti was more subdued in the later press conference than in the earlier one. His remarks were brief--he discussed the unfairness of the election--and there was no mention of the next press conference. We later learned from an MDC source that the MDC was having trouble getting election results from the provinces. It would not hold another press conference until it had more complete results. At its next press conference, it hoped to announce victory.

ZEC Allows Confusion

¶5. (C) Following the MDC's 11 am press conference, the ZEC held a five-minute press conference at which it stated it was working on election results and admonished diplomats not to prejudge election results. Since then, we have heard that a number of high-level ZANU-PF officials have been defeated. These include Dydimus Mutasa (Minister of State Security), Joseph Made (Minister of Agriculture), Patrick Chinimasa (Minister of Justice), Sydney Sekeremayi (Minister of Defense) and Saviour Kasuhwere (Youth Minister). We have heard conflicting reports as to whether vice president Joice Mujuru was defeated.

HARARE 00000247 002 OF 002

Parallel Vote Counts

¶6. (C) The MDC had hoped to rapidly complete a parallel vote through communication with polling agents throughout the country, preempt the ZEC by declaring victory, and then have its supporters celebrate in the streets. Biti's initial optimistic assessment was based on reports received from the field. Because it did not have agents at all polling stations, and because communications in Zimbabwe are problematic, the count slowed and the MDC was not yet ready to announce a victory as of this morning.

¶7. (C) The Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN), with the assistance of the National Democratic Institute (NDI) is conducting a sample parallel vote count using about 480 polling stations. As of this morning, ZESN had received data from 88 percent of urban stations and 42 percent of rural stations. ZESN hopes to have a large enough sample to announce results tomorrow.

And the Winner is?

¶8. (C) Late in the day we received word from the MDC and another source that the ZEC was going to declare Mugabe the winner. The MDC told us it hoped to preempt Mugabe by announcing that Tsvangirai had won. A couple of hours later, the MDC informed us that Mugabe had postponed his announcement and that the MDC for the time being would have no announcement. We do not know whether our original information was just rumor, or whether Mugabe for his own reasons--or because of pressure--decided not to go forward.

¶9. (SBU) CNN has reported that the ZEC will make its official announcement tomorrow. We have been unable to confirm this, but an announcement two days after the election would be timely.

¶10. (C) A source within the MDC told us Sunday evening that

the MDC's parallel count was proceeding smoothly and the MDC would probably make an announcement late Sunday evening or Monday morning.

COMMENT

¶11. (C) Zimbabwe is riding a roller coaster. Based on the MDC's polling as well as observations by diplomatic observer teams, there was a feeling this morning that Mugabe was heading for a stunning defeat. Long-time Zimbabwe watchers who have been waiting for years to see Mugabe go, but had despaired of the MDC, were starting to believe that the end was in sight. But failure of the MDC to proclaim victory, and later news that Mugabe was going to be declared the winner, resulted in an abrupt change of mood.

¶12. (C) We are confident that Mugabe did not win the election, and we are confident that Tsvangirai received the most votes, although we cannot say with certainty that Tsvangirai received over 50 percent of the vote. It appears

SIPDIS
that many of Mugabe's henchmen have lost their parliamentary seats and, in light of the widespread antipathy to him from within the party, Mugabe may be feeling cornered. The most likely scenario is that he will have himself declared the winner. If so, it remains to be seen how the MDC will react.
MCGEE